

VZCZCXRO1430
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHRY #0588/01 2821611
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 081611Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3008
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFIS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000588

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/08/2018

TAGS: PGOV PMIL PREL ASEC GV

SUBJECT: COUP PLOTTERS CONTINUE TO COORDINATE STRATEGY

REF: CONAKRY 0568

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. A core group of young military officers from what is commonly known as the 19th promotion, in coordination with an underground youth movement, continue to plot a coup d'etat to overthrow the Guinean Government (reftel). They are in the process of fine tuning their strategy and do not appear to be backing down, although they may ultimately fall apart as other groups have done in recent months. Embassy continues to emphasize that coups are unacceptable. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) Young military officers and youth leaders continue to plot to overthrow the Guinean Government and oust President Conte from power. According to sources, youth leaders are working with lawyers to write out a series of proposed constitutional amendments and legislative decisions, which the military would then force the National Assembly to pass. The amendments reportedly include provisions to dissolve the National Assembly, declare the president incompetent, and call for presidential elections. The coup organizers currently plan to take over the National Assembly, which convened its budgetary session on September 24, demand that the deputies pass the proposed legislation, and then force their resignations.

¶3. (S) Information suggests that various actors are still debating exactly how to handle President Conte. Strategies reportedly range from forcing the president's resignation to having him peacefully retreat to his village as head of state in name only.

¶4. (S) Despite indications that contacts within the 19th promotion may have gone incommunicado earlier in the week, a youth leader told A/DCM during an October 7 reception that the youths have had no problem communicating with their military contacts, and that he had met personally with one of the key leaders earlier that day. Contact added that the military has identified a few key officers within the presidential guard (Red Berets) who they are quietly trying to convince to join them. He said that the coup organizers are fairly confident that they will be able to recruit some Red Berets over to their cause, which will facilitate their plans for a bloodless coup since the Red Berets are seen as their most likely opposition.

¶5. (S) A/DCM reiterated to the youth leader that the U.S. Government views coups d'etat as an absolutely unacceptable mechanism for political change. Contact nodded and said "I know, I know." He indicated that a coup would not necessarily be his first choice, but that the organizers are prepared to continue down their current path.

¶6. (S) With respect to the possible involvement of mutiny leader Claude Pivi (aka Coplan) in the coup plot, a youth contact confirmed to DATT that members of the 19th promotion

are working very closely with Pivi.

COMMENT

¶7. (S) Contacts have not indicated a specific timeline for a possible coup attempt, although comments suggest that they could be looking at some time over the next few weeks. Both military and youth sources told DATT that if Conte retires to his village, they would be presented with a "good tactical opportunity" to move. They do not appear to be backing down from their plan, but instead fine tuning their strategy. The longer they wait, the higher the risk of discovery, and contacts have already started talking about fears that the presidency may be trying to buy off various groups and/or looking to start arresting key individuals.

¶8. (S) Guinea's current political dynamic is complex with a diverse mix of players. As has been the case with recent efforts of various groups to coalesce, this group of coup plotters could very well fall apart as money exchanges hands, personal ambitions emerge, and ethnocentrism take hold. Contacts have long been advocating for a coup, but we have yet to see one, despite clear opportunities to pull one off, such as during the May military mutiny.

¶9. (S) The Embassy continues to convey the message that coups are unacceptable, but contacts do not seem likely to be deterred. If they go forward with their plan, Embassy does not anticipate any direct threat to U.S. citizens or interests, but is prepared to respond to any resulting

CONAKRY 00000588 002 OF 002

crisis. END COMMENT.
RASPOLIC